



THE HALL OF FIRE FAN WEBZINE

Issue 65

October 2009



GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS...

Welcome to another issue of Hall of Fire. We have an issue that we hope will inspire your Halloween spirit. In these pages you will find information to incorporate the Barrow-downs into a campaign as well as a new NPC that could prove fatal to your party. Also, there is a new adventure that will hopefully give some players the creeps as they go through it.

Hope you all have a happy and safe Halloween and that you enjoy the tricks and treats that are in this issue.

We look forward to hearing from you and happy gaming.

Micah A. Walles (Razor77) &
Celebraen
Co-Editors Hall of Fire

THE MIDDLE-EARTH HALL OF FIRE

The Unofficial Lord of the Rings RPG Webzine

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CONTACT THE HALL OF FIRE AT:

submissions@halloffire.org

CREW

MICAH A. WALLS (RAZOR77), CO-EDITOR

razor77@halloffire.org

CELEBRAEN, CO-EDITOR

JEFF ISLAND (BLACKFOX), LAYOUT

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/halloffire>

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RUINS IN THE THIRD AGE

BARROW-DOWNS

by Joel Sanda

The Barrow-downs lie south of the Great East Road, east of The Shire and west of Bree, and probably within five miles of Tom Bombadil's house, almost due south. These downs became evil after the Dúnedain waned, when they became inhabited by Barrow-wights from Angmar.

CLIMATE

The climate of this area is nearly identical to that of the Shire - mild summers and winters. Fog is likely a persistent local weather phenomena in this area, owing to the presence of many small streams and tight gullies and gulches that get sun only late in the day.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

It's not likely many will have any reason to travel here, unless they are looking for adventure - in which case the Barrow-downs are the adventure hook. Still, there are several reasons someone would find the area alluring:

- The proximity to Tom Bombadil's house may lead adventurers to stumble upon the Barrow-downs in the same manner the Hobbits did - accident and bad luck (or fate.)
- There will probably be rumors of buried treasure here, owing to those who may know the area once held the graves of the Dúnedain and their proximity to the Great East Road and the wall with a visible dike, marking the former border of Cardolan.
- Anyone in the area may see the standing stones and be drawn to them out of curiosity - perhaps a hunting trip a little too deep into the Old Forest.

THE RUINS TODAY

The Barrow-downs today resemble hills or mounds, not obvious singularly but as a group they become obvious. Each hill or mound will probably have ancient and crumbling stone works protruding from the hill's top, partially concealed by grasses and bushes as well as weathered away. Also, standing stones, former markers, will be visible from far away, if they are still standing, or crumbled and perhaps looking like a fallen stone column.

The actual burial chambers may be intact or collapsed, and will all likely be a simple tunnel leading into the mound, which ends in one or two rooms of worked stone where the body remains. Barrow-wights and skeletons are the likely inhabitants of most of these now, waiting for the chance to reawaken.

FELLOWSHIP TIE-IN

The Hobbits were in this area September 26 - 29, 3018.



By Ted Nasmith

ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES

IVY BRIARSON

by Celebraen

Ivy grew up in Archet, her parents making a living as tanners & leather-workers. A happy, pretty girl, she married Tom Briarson while still rather young. He was a hunter from Bree, regularly bringing back wild game for the cooks. Ivy continued to help her parents, often bringing their goods to Bree to sell. Her own skills in crafting leather garments grew & she regularly offered some of the best-made clothes in town. She took great pride in making attractive & sturdy apparel.

Ivy was very much in love with her husband, & he with her. Though his job was rather dangerous, he often promised that he would never leave her. Tragically, only a few months ago, Tom disappeared while hunting. A search party of the men from Bree found only his torn & bloody remains. All of the evidence seemed to indicate he'd fallen afoul of a pack of wolves. When the frantic Ivy heard the news, she collapsed unconscious & remained that way for several hours. On her eventual revival, the Bree-town healer noted that, though grief-stricken, she seemed to have an attitude of determination.

Tom is buried in the graveyard north of Bree where Ivy visits him every day. She continues to live in their little house on the edge of town, though it's taken on a slightly neglected look as Ivy throws herself into her crafting as an antidote to grief. She also spends a fair amount of time with the healer, learning about various herbs & talking about long-ago legends. The Bree-folk say she spends a night or two with her parents at least once a week.

Ivy Briarson's sad face & mournful eyes hide a deadly secret. Her grief at the loss of her husband has driven her mad. She is convinced that the wolves that attacked him devoured his spirit & that he is now one of them. Since he promised to never leave her, he must still be waiting for her & it's up to her to find out how to reunite with him. Rather than spending the nights with her parents, she's been slipping out into the wilds to try to track the wolf pack that she thinks her husband now travels with. Cobbling together information from old stories & the herbal lore she's acquired, Ivy believes she's discovered a way to transform herself into a she-wolf so that she can find her true love. She requires only a few more things: a special herb from the Old Forest,

IVY BRIARSON (MIDDLE MAN)

Order
Craftsman

Attributes

Bearing: 5 **Nimbleness:** 8 (+1)
Perception: 7 **Strength:** 6
Vitality: 10 (+2) **Wits:** 6

Reactions

Stamina: (+2) **Swiftiness:** (+3)
Willpower: (+0) **Wisdom:** (+0)
Health: 10
Courage: 1 (may only be spent on tests relating to her insanity)
Renown: 4 (within Bree & surrounding area)

Abilities

Adaptable (+2 to Swiftiness), Dominion of Man, Skilled, Speedy Work, Place of Trade, Masterwork

Skills

Appraise +3, Craft (Tailor) +8, Craft (Leatherwork) +4, Debate (Bargain) +2, Lore (Herbs) +1, Lore (Legends) +2, Observe +2, Persuade +2, Stealth +1, Track +1

Edge

Craftmaster (+2 to all Craft, Smithcraft, & Stonecraft tests)

Flaws

Dark Secret (plotting sacrifice of a sentient), Insanity (Delusional), Insanity (Obsession: dead husband)



a perfect wolf-skin, & a sacrifice. Then, on the night of the full moon....

Ivy can interact with the players in several ways. For characters just starting out in Bree, her sturdy leather clothing may serve as armor for those unused to the heavier forms of armor, as well as being simply warm & well-made. She may desire that player characters fetch the herb or wolf-skin she needs, offering her goods as a trade. She may also test the characters to see if one of them would be a suitable sacrifice. After all, she doesn't want to kill a friend, just reunite with her beloved husband; a stranger might make a perfect sacrifice.



FAN FLAVOUR

NEW FLAW

INSANITY

by Celebraen

A flaw that can take multiple forms, Insanity indicates at least one type of mental imbalance, such as being obsessed or delusional. A character obsessed with learning magic will do anything for the chance of learning something new, for example, spying on a wizard or searching a loremaster's belongings. He may also not analyze risks related to his obsession correctly, ie. how likely he is to get caught. Thinking on the topic of obsession might be illogical & he might disbelieve anything that seems to contradict what he wants to believe, such as thinking that magic is the result of owning a particular item rather than study & lore.

A character who is delusional may cling to irrational beliefs, such as if she eats grapes before a battle, she'll be invincible. Delusional insanity also covers hallucinations, both auditory & visual. This type of insanity may be more noticeable to others; a character who regularly talks to trees, acting as if they answer back, is going to quickly get a reputation that may make things more difficult.

Narrator's permission is required for any type of Insanity.

Usage

The following is an example of how the Flaw could be used.

Since most people innately feel uncomfortable with someone that has some form of mental instability, their social interactions with someone with Insanity will suffer. Someone with Insanity will suffer a +2 TN penalty to all social tests for each instance of Insanity that the person they are interacting with know about.

The Best way to determine if someone is aware of another person Insanity is by a Renown test. The Narrator will need to determine what Degree of Success is required to find out about a particular Insanity.

THE ROAD GOES EVERY ON...

A GRIM NIGHT FOR MURDER (PART I)

by Micah A. Walles (razor77@halloffire.org)

Here is a short adventure that can be used as a starter adventure for a chronicle or as an interlude in an ongoing chronicle. While this adventure is meant to stand on its own, it can also be a springboard into a larger series of adventures.

INTRODUCTION

The characters entered a small town within twenty miles of the west coast of Middle-earth near the mouth of the Isen. It had been a rainy day, and the ground was very muddy. There was a single inn in this town. It was also the only tavern. There were several rooms available for the characters. Even with few guests staying at the inn, the common room was very full. Most of the town enjoyed gathering at the inn for a pint and to share the day's news. While the characters sit and enjoy a hot meal, there are several things that they may pick up on from the gathered crowd:

- There has been several corsairs from the south attacking shipping in the area and even a few attacks on coastal towns
- Several nearby towns had been attacked, many all but destroyed, leaving very few survivors
- If this campaign takes place in the late Third Age, there is one older man is ranting about the Nine Riders of Death that he saw further inland along the Isen. If asked about it, he explains that only death could explain the cold and foreboding feeling that he had upon seeing them in the moonlight. The other patrons laugh off the story of "Crazy Tom"
- The mayor's house had been robbed the night before. Several trinkets of some value were stolen but there were also a few old books of no real value that were taken.
- Also while the characters are eating they may (TN 15 Observe test) see a tall and very muscular man enter the inn. He stops to nod to the innkeeper with a smile and then proceeds upstairs.

THE MYSTERY

Several minutes after the tall and muscular man went upstairs, the patrons in the common room hear shouting coming from upstairs. Exactly what is being yelled can not be made out over the din of the crowd but it is quickly followed by a scream of pain and then silence. Several of the patrons and the innkeeper rush up stairs to find source of the scream. There are several rooms on the second floor. One of the rooms was locked from the inside with a bolt. If one of the characters has an ax, the innkeeper asks her to chop down the door; otherwise, the inn keeper sends someone downstairs to retrieve his firewood ax.

Through the door a body can be seen lying face down on the floor. There is a pool of blood spreading out from under it. A quick look around the room reveals a small desk with a chair on the left-hand wall and on the right is a bed. On the far wall is an open window. The body is closest to the bed with its head pointing toward the opposite wall.

Upon a quick look around the room, there does not appear to be any sign of the murderer. There is no sign of a weapon in the room. In fact, very little is in the room. If asked, the Inn Keeper will remember that this traveler arrived the other day with a pack that is also not in the room.

The victim is not wearing any jewelry. He died from what looks to be a single thrust with a sword that pierced his heart. Upon examining the body, one might notice that the texture of the skin seems to fit more with a body that has been dead for a few days rather than one that has died in the last hour. If asked, the Inn Keeper will swear that he saw the man at breakfast that morning.

A thorough search of the room, TN 15, yields two items that were not instantly apparent upon entering the room. The first is that there is a coin purse under the bed. The location of the purse suggests that it may have fallen or possibly accidentally been kicked under the bed. The purse contains many very old coins. Someone versed the proper lore; Lore: History, Lore: Gondor (History) (this provides an addition +5 to the results) can easily, TN 10, determine that the coins date from the Second Age. With a bit more examination, TN 20, it becomes apparent that the coins actually come from both the end of the Second Age and the beginning of the Third Age. Some one well-versed in the subject, TN 30, can see that the coins come from all over Gondor and there seems to be a progression in their age. You will want to keep track of which party member is keeping the coin purse or if it is being left in one of their packs.

The other item that is found is a small silver trinket that seems to have fallen behind the desk. Upon seeing it, the Inn Keeper gasps and explains that it is one of the trinkets that was stolen from the Mayor's house the night before. He then starts to mutter to himself that the dead man seemed to be such a nice person and that he would never of expected him to have been a thief.

ANOTHER TWIST

As the search completes, a woman walks into the room calling for the innkeeper. Upon entering the room, she gasps at seeing the body and leaves the room. The innkeeper goes out into the hall to find out what she is in need of. The conversation that follows can be heard by any players in the room and reveals the following: Her husband had told her that he need to go to the inn to discuss business with a new client. He had informed her that he would only be gone for 10 minutes, but it had been close to an hour and she had a feeling that something had happened to him. The innkeeper informs her that he saw her husband just before all of this began going upstairs but had not seen him since then.

At some point in time the alley-way behind the inn will be investigated. Due to the rain, it is very muddy, and any footprints would obvious. However, there are no prints left in the ally. The alley-way is wide and the building that is opposite the inn is also a two-story building. There is no way that anyone could jump from the inn to the other building, and there is not any way to get to the roof of the inn.

Upon completing the investigation the Inn Keeper informs the party that they should meet with the mayor in the morning and let him know what they have found.

A MEETING WITH THE MAYOR

The next morning the players are led to the Mayor's house. He happily greets them and asks them to sit. While he is glad to see one of the trinkets returned to him, he is confused by many things involved with this mystery. The first and most confusing to him is why did this stranger come to his town, steal these items, and then stay in town for another full day just to be killed. The second thing that is not comprehensible is where is

Henry Smythy and what is his part in the murder. It is known that Smythy was going to meet the dead man, and no one has him since he left the common room of the inn.

The objects that were stolen are also somewhat confusing. The trinkets were of some value, but the Mayor finds it hard to believe that anyone would break into his house simply to steal them. The only other things that were taken were some old books. The books have practically no value whatsoever. One was a cookbook that had been passed down through the Mayor's family and only had sentimental value, the second was a book on farming, the final book was a history book of the region. This last book has very little value to anyone, including scholars because the book is old enough that most, if not all, of the places mentioned have had their names changed over the years.

Despite all of these still unresolved issues, the Mayor has a more pressing issue he would like the players' help on. He would like them to investigate one of the recently destroyed villages in the area to see if it can be determined how it was destroyed in the hopes that this village will not suffer the same fate. The village in question is about two to three days away by horse. If the players do not have horses, the Mayor could arrange for some to be provided.

JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

As the players get ready to bed down for the night, a band of orcs attacks the players. This band is far too large for the players to possibly fight off. If the coin purse was being kept in one of the player's pack, then soon after the fight begins a large bat flies in and steals the pack that has the coin purse. Soon after the bat flies off, the orcs leave. The next day as they continue on with their journey they find the pack. The contents are scattered across a small area. Some of the food, if any, looks to have been taken by small animals, but other than that the only thing missing is the coin purse.

If, however, one of the players has the coin purse on them, then they will feel a deep unnatural cold envelop them and then they will need to make an opposed Will test. If they fail the will test, they will have no recollection of the battle as if they blackout and only coming to as the orcs are fleeing for no apparent reason. If they ask their companions about what happened, their companions didn't notice anything wrong with them during the fight. The next time that they check their pockets, they will find that the coin purse is gone.

The rest of the trip to the village is uneventful. Upon entering the village they find that the only thing left are the skeletons of burnt-out buildings. There does not appear to be any sign of the former villagers.



Next month we will see what happened to the villagers and the secrets of the mystery will be revealed.

WHAT'S OUT THERE

This is a list of Web sites along with Decipher's official Web sites. We have found they supply useful Lord of the Rings game information.

THE HALL OF FIRE WEBZINE http://halloffire.org THE HALL OF FIRE WIKI http://wiki.halloffire.org DECIPHER'S LORD OF THE RINGS RPG HOME http://lotrrpg.fanhq.com ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARDA http://www.glyphweb.com/arda/default.htm FAN MODULES FOR MIDDLE-EARTH http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fan-modules SCOTT'S RPG CENTRAL http://www.geocities.com/scott_metz/ CHRONICLES OF THE NORTH http://rpg.avioc.org/ MERP.COM http://www.merp.com OTHER MINDS MAGAZINE http://www.othermindsmagazine.com	THE MAD IRISHMAN http://www.mad-irishman.net THE LAST ALLIANCE http://thelastalliance.com RPG TOOLS FOR DECIPHER'S CODA GAMES http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpgtools/ THE STEWARD AND THE KING http://www.stewardandking.net THE TOWER HILLS http://homepage.mac.com/jeremybaker/towerhills TREK-RPG.NET http://forum.trek-rpg.net/index.php CODA WEBZINE REPOSITORY http://groups.yahoo.com/group/coda_webzine THE ONE RING.COM http://www.theonering.com/ THE ONE RING.NET http://www.theonering.net
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CALLING ALL GAMERS!

Interested in submitting...

- A mini or side adventure?
- New creatures, or fell beasts?
- New Orders or Elite Orders?
- Racial / Order packages?
- NPC's?
- Weapons / equipment / magical items?
- Fan Art?

If so, write to us for details on submission submissions@halloffire.org with 'Fan Content' in the subject line. Please include your name and/or pseudonym (handle/online identity) and email address(es) with which one of our editors may contact you.

Please note that if you would like to submit a mini-adventure, Decipher will not consider it for publishing.

Fancy yourself a writer or artist and would like to contribute to the webzine?

If so, write to us at submissions@halloffire.org with 'Writer' in the subject line. One of the editors will get back to you with details about writing for **THE HALL OF FIRE**.

Want to know what the submission guide lines are?

Visit http://wiki.halloffire.org/Submission_Information for the current submission guide lines.

If you would like to post an advertisement for:

- A local or online RPG that you are hosting
- An RPG convention or tournament
- Or any events pertaining to The Lord of the Rings RPG

Write to us at ads@halloffire.org with 'Ad' in the subject line along with your advertisement. The advertisement must be less than 100 words and any graphic to go with it must be no more than 1' x 1'.